

HENDON HAMMERED IN LEAGUE KEY TEST

All-Action Tussle Thrills The Fans

Wycombe Wanderers 4, Hendon 2

WYCOMBE WANDERERS gained two precious points at the expense of Hendon on Wednesday evening to keep their championship chances alive.

With this convincing victory behind them Wycombe now embark on a five-match sequence, which, if successful, could bring the Isthmian title to Loakes Park.

This was a match neither side could afford to lose. With the league title virtually at stake both teams produced some attractive and flowing football which had the large crowd roaring their approval.

How Wycombe rose to the occasion! They fought like terriers, chasing, challenging and harassing for every ball, never content to lose possession, and Hendon could find no answer to their all-action tactics.

It was particularly fitting that this magnificent match should be witnessed by England team-manager Charles Hughes, who earlier in the day announced Britain's squad for the first Olympic tie against West Germany in October.

Wycombe opened strongly and pressed frenziedly for that vital early goal which would put them on the road to victory.

It was fast and furious stuff, with goalmouth thrills and spills in abundance. Wycombe probed cautiously while Hendon relied on quick and deadly counter attacks.

FIRST BLOOD

After 15 minutes Wycombe drew first blood with a great goal. Bates' corner was headed out to Roystone, who drove home a glorious 25-yard cross-shot into the top right-hand corner past the astonished Swannell.

Wycombe threw themselves back into the fray, sensing they had Hendon on the run. How right they were! Panic and desperation crept into the visitors' usually so stylish defence as the Wanderers chased forward thirsting for more goals.

NARROW ESCAPES

Wycombe settled down to take a grip on the match but Hendon still looked dangerous in breakaways, with Harding prominent. Maskell had several narrow escapes but was generally well in command of the situation and certainly looked far happier than Swannell.

Two minutes from the end Wycombe conceded a simple goal when the defence let Quail move through and give Sleap the opportunity of scoring his second goal of the evening.

It would be unfair to single out just one of Wycombe's players for special praise because this was a great team victory. But Ian Rundle at centre-half cannot go unmentioned. He was a tower of strength in the middle, his tackling was solid and his work in the air outstanding.

Wycombe Wanderers: J. Maskell; P. Eyres, P. Roystone; B. Baker, I. Rundle, C. Gale; L. Worley, V. Busby, L. Merrick, K. Samuels, P. Bates.

Hendon: J. Swannell; D. Hogwood, M. Cooper; R. Sleap, J. Ashworth, R. Cantwell; D. Lakey, D. Shacklock, A. Harding, J. Quail, M. Salter.

They were rewarded in the 25th minute. Baker deceived the defence with a well-flighted through ball and, although Swannell blocked Samuels's first effort, the inside-left made no mistake with his second.

Wycombe went in at half-time two goals ahead and knowing they had the advantage of the strong wind in the second period.

WIDE OPEN

But Wanderers were slow to get into their stride at the start of the second half and Hendon kept the match wide open by scoring after 55 minutes through Sleap.

Two goals in five minutes from Wycombe set Loakes Park alight with celebration. First Hendon's Lakey turned and pushed a harmless-looking pass to Paul Bates, who ran the length of the Hendon half, pursued by three defenders, to tuck his shot past the advancing Swannell.

Five minutes later Bates crossed for Samuels to score with a brilliant header from the edge of the box via the underside of the crossbar.